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Continuing Latin Notes

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AN EXPERIMENT IN THE USE OF VOCABULARY AND FORMS

By RUTH E. THOMAS

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Latin teachers have long been convinced that much of the difficulty which the beginning student encounters lies in the way in which he is compelled to learn his vocabulary and forms. Studies designed to lead eventually to the solution of the problem were made some years ago, and now effective work is being done by the Committee on Research of the American Classical League, and others.

The present trend in education is toward socialization, and the more recent beginning Latin texts bear strong evidence of this fact. Without doubt it is well to teach the children who study ancient languages as much as possible about the life and civilization of the times. This information is unexcelled as background for the reading of literature and history; yet every teacher of Latin knows that the knowledge of the manner in which a Roman banquet was served—fascinating as it may be, and much as it may help to hold the interest of the student—does not in itself teach the student to *read* Latin. In spite of attractive texts and projects in handwork, the percentage of those who learn the language even reasonably well is comparatively small; and there has been from time to time a note of discouragement in the articles appearing in classical publications. We are realizing that pleasing exteriors do not eliminate real difficulties. Many children of today cannot or will not adapt themselves to the study of Latin as it is commonly presented. For the first few lessons they are very enthusiastic and seem to learn readily, but by the close of the second month they are discouraged. Why? In response to inquiry, they will say that Latin is too hard, that there is too much new vocabulary, and that the words are not in the right order.

About six years ago, the lack of preparation on the part of college freshmen who enrolled for Latin, added to the fact that these same people proved to be more efficient in English composition than were others of the group (I assist in the English department), convinced me that I should try to do something. Instead of making the usual assignments in parallel reading, I asked the students to read for an hour and a half each week the hardest Latin they could read easily and rapidly—even if it were in a first year text. As the class was comparatively small, I required each pupil to report once a week for an oral test. At this time he either translated some lines which he had studied intensively or summarized material which he had read rapidly at sight. If the book he had been using seemed too difficult or too easy, I recommended another which would tax his capacity for grasping the thought of a passage, but would not be beyond his ready comprehension. Meantime I stressed content and the ability to associate

old words, both English and Latin, with new ones used by the author studied for class work.

The results of this study were so gratifying that I became interested in the children of the Training School, and wrote Latin passages of varying types to be used there. Those in which I attempted to use the reading method employed by Kullmer and Thelin in the teaching of French and German I found very unsatisfactory until I supplemented them with grammar. Perhaps by reading model sentences repeatedly high school students can learn that *Agricolae frumentum dedit* cannot be interpreted to mean that the farmer did the giving, but I did not succeed in having them do so.

My next effort to solve the difficulty consisted in the use of a traditional text combined with a comparatively large amount of easy reading matter from first year books. These the children took from the classroom and read. They reported, as had the college students, once each week. The fact that we have one-hour periods made this possible; and the boys and girls were happy to find that there was Latin which they could read without hesitation. The psychological reaction was good, because they were given courage to undertake the solution of new problems. At the close of two years of high school Latin of this sort, they had become, I believe, the strongest and most enthusiastic group in my experience. Latin for them was not a hard task which had to be done, but a real joy. I used games and various devices for drill, but these were not very different from those of previous years. The reading of simple material with familiar vocabulary seemed to mark the advance.

In the second semester last year two high school teachers joined me in an experiment with beginners, using stories which I had written according to a carefully worked out program. One teacher employed them as a supplement to the text, but the other made the text the supplement. The latter, Mr. R. L. Ladd, of the high school at Covington, Kentucky, had a class of thirty-eight. In order that we might check the effectiveness of the material, we gave to these pupils without previous announcement the most rigid translation tests we could devise. We marked the papers with old-fashioned numerical grades; for example, when the translation was from English to Latin and involved fifty Latin words, we deducted two for every word not exactly correct in spelling and in length of terminal vowels. When the process was reversed the checking was just as severe. In all there were thirteen sets of papers. Only one child in thirty-eight failed to pass the tests, which involved every construction and every vocabulary word completely presented in the material used. These tests, however, were so short that the penalty for error was comparatively great.

Because the experiment has been limited to but a few students, and because there are weaknesses inherent in the tests used, I am not yet ready to publish the teaching material; but I do believe that it is safe for those who are

trying to solve the problem of teaching Latin effectively to conclude that their hope lies in the systematic presentation and repetition of vocabulary and syntax through the medium of large quantities of well-graded Latin for rapid reading.

SOME LATIN RIDDLES IN ELEGIAC COUPLETS

By A. F. GEYSER, S.J.

Campion, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

1. *Integra si mea vox, spumosum pervehor aequor;*
Littera prima perit: nubila celsa peto.
(Answer: Navis-avis)
2. *Regia sum volucris. Mutetur littera: flatu*
Provehor horrisono tractibus e Boreae.
(Answer: Aquila-aquilo)
3. *Tempore brumali niteo velut albida lana;*
Incipias aliter: res ego nigra, tenax.
(Answer: Nix—pix)
4. *Significo famam populi sermone creatam:*
Ficta vel exhibeo; dramaque saepe noto.
(Answer: Fabula)
5. *Interior pars sum manuum, signumque triumphi;*
Desertae Libyae celsior arbor item.
(Answer: Palma)
6. *Raeda citissima sum; careo temone iugoque;*
Motum percelerem machina suppeditat.
(Answer: Currus automobilis)
7. *Alas protendo; flabellis tractaque, motu*
Quae gyran rapido, trans iuga celsa volo.
(Answer: Navicula aeroplana)
8. *Perfidus instat equus manibus fabricatus Epei;*
Tento dolum iaculis: implicor hei! colubris.
(Answer: Laocoön)
9. *Dictator, Poenis vastantibus Itala rura,*
Cunctando miseram restituo patriam.
(Answer: Q. Fabius Maximus Cunctator)
10. *Commiserans fregi servorum vincula dura;*
Vita me spoliat perfida glans subito.
(Answer: Abraham Lincoln)

THE MODERNITY OF LATIN

By HARRY E. WEDECK

Erasmus Hall High School, Brooklyn, N. Y.

In these frenzied times, when so many educational whims hold the stage for a day—possibly only for a day—it is salutary to recall that Latin can, not by means of any *ad hoc* arguments, but inherently by its very content, rival these times of ours in up-to-dateness and modernity.

In the matter of mere mechanical contrivances, in respect of language, and in the broader literary sense, this modernity is palpable and striking. We boast, for instance, of household devices, but Nero, too, had a dumb waiter built into his *domus aurea*. Other activities, instruments, and implements that we associate exclusively with modern times were commonplaces among the Romans: smelting ore and mining (there are miners' lamps extant); army smiths; safe deposit vaults; windlasses and cranes and fire-pumps and water organs; pulleys and steel-jacks. There were glass-blowers and real dry-cleaners. Nero used a home-made monocle to pick out the significant details of a contest or a musical performance. The modern swimming pools in private homes cause wonderment. But the Romans, too, had such swimming pools. The cabaret?—What is Virgil's *Copa* but a cabaret scene, touched, possibly, with a certain rusticity, but still echoing with the hostess' cymbals and her swirling Syrian saraband? Daily News?—The Romans had their *Acta Diurna*. Capitalists?—What of Crassus and his wholesale real estate deals while Rome was

literally burning? Labor Unions? Strikes?—What of Spartacus? Apartment houses?—The huge *insulae* served the same purpose. A compact?—There were lipstick and charcoal pencil, false eyelids, false teeth (that, as Martial says, could be put away at night like a silk frock), and all the appurtenances of the *myropolium*, the beauty parlor; not to mention Ovid's "Guide to Facial Beautification."

"What's the news?" we say to make conversation. The Romans had a similar phrase, "Quid novi?" A favor to be executed pleasantly is often stimulated by the coaxing "There's a dear!" which is merely the Plautine "Te amabo," used in an identical sense. "Abi in malam crucem" is a pendulous objurgation, which has its exact modern equivalent. And "Non flocci facio" is just, "I don't care a straw." "Hands up!", to stoop to headline tactics, is of course "Tolle!"

That brings us to something else. It is remarkable how, with just a little effort in extending one's reading in Latin and Greek, it becomes possible to express the most modern, the most contemporary ideas, inventions, fashions, all the phases of lower and higher living, in good, understandable Latin or Greek. And there is no occasion for the Philistine to show his disapproval by a certain disdainful cheer, "... curvato naso strepitum tamquam e fistula effundere." In the modern city, where bullets (*glandes plumbeae*) sometimes fly, stenographers (*dactylographae*), eager to earn their weekly check (*nummaria syngrapha*), pick up a newspaper (*ephemeris*) and rush for a seat in the subway (*vehiculum notabile subterraneum*). Here they gape at the advertisements (*notitiae*), whisper to their friends of tickets (*tesserae*) for a good show (*fabula scaenica*), or, after going to the *cupedinarium*, will "take it easy" (*ingenio indulgere*), to prepare themselves for the morrow. You can travel with passports in Latin, buy toothpowder, drink your coffee, wear silk stockings, play in the tennis court, and even visit your friends at the hospital.

Entering upon more literary but not less lively ground, we find in Latin literature the prototypes of these modern times. Detective stories?—Of course there's Cicero's "Murder at Larinum," and Seneca's "Blood-Stained Wall." Ghost stories?—There are Pliny's famous stories, replete with rattling chains and mouldy bones. Mystery and adventure?—There are brigands galore in "The Golden Ass," and kidnappings, and magic transformations. The American novel dealing with the American scene?—Its counterpart is Petronius' broad, realistic "Scenes in Roman Bohemia." A newspaper columnist without a newspaper?—Seneca answers the description to perfection. Answers to correspondents?—That role, too, Seneca fills. And if you want modern stories written in Latin, there are modern Latin versions of Grimm's and Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales, Kipling's "Vampire," "The Hunting of the Snark," "Hiawatha," and "Sherlock Holmes."

Things of this nature, of course, are, though not at all *extra causam*, very often *extra cursum*; but there ought to be glimpses afforded to the raw neophyte so that he may realize how close the ancients are, both in thought and in their actual living conditions, to our contemporary selves.

ALEXANDER LEE BONDURANT

It is with a deep sense of personal loss that we record the death of Professor A. L. Bondurant at his home at University, Miss., on January 12, 1937. Professor Bondurant had been identified with the work of the American Classical League since its founding in 1919, served as a member of the Advisory Committee in charge of the Classical Investigation conducted in 1921-1924, was a leader in the Vergilian Pilgrimage and Cruise in 1930, and for many years had been a Vice President of the League. Born in Virginia on June 22, 1865, and graduated from Hampden-Sydney College in 1884, he went to the University of Mississippi in 1889, where, with occasional leaves of absence for study or teaching here or

abroad, he served as a teacher of the classics up to the day before his death. In 1904 he was made Chairman of the Department of Latin and was also Dean of the Graduate School from its founding in 1927 until he became Dean Emeritus in 1936. In 1924-1925 he was president of the Classical Association of the Middle West and South and for six years (1923-1929) he was secretary of the Commission on Higher Institutions of the Southern Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools.—W. L. C.

FREDERIC STANLEY DUNN

The cause of classical education suffered a severe loss in the death of Professor Frederic S. Dunn, at Eugene, Ore., on January 7, 1937, after an illness of three months. Born at Eugene on August 5, 1872, and graduated from the University of Oregon in 1892, he spent six years studying and teaching in the East and then returned to his home town and alma mater in 1898. From that time until his death he faithfully served the educational interests of his university, the Pacific Coast, and the nation. Members of the American Classical League will remember him most gratefully for his services as Chairman of the Program Committee for the Sixteenth Annual Meeting of the League held in Portland, Oregon, on July 1 and 2, 1936. Though by no means in good health at the time, he devoted untiring energy to the preparation and conducting of that meeting and considered it a privilege to do so, as is indicated by the closing sentence of a letter addressed last summer to the present writer: "Such an opportunity comes but once; I am cordially grateful that it was mine."—W. L. C.

TRIBUTE TO HORACE

By YOUNEE WATSON, S.J.

Saint Louis University

O Horace of Venusia, genial bard!
I cannot reach thy praise; my effort mocks,
And yet I fain would sound a joyful chord,
As with fresh laurels I entwine thy locks.

The purple shadows of the Sabine hills
Gloom in my memory with the thought of thee,
And ghostly white Soracte rises sheer,
While Font Bandusia purls thy name to me.

Though nature's silent beauty charmed thy heart,
In blither joys delight though e'er hast found;
The ruby sparkle of sweet Massic wine,
And Youth and Love with smiling roses crowned.

Thy wisdom soars aloft on wings of sound;
Melodious measures golden thoughts refine;
O Matine bee of Tibur's fragrant groves,
A treasure-house of honeyed verse is thine!

The cool and shady haunts where muses dwell
Were dear to thee; and dear the sacred grove
Where first Apollo touched thy trembling ear
And bade thee sing of thunder-rolling Jove.

No slave of passion, thy unfettered soul
Rejoiced to soar in Reason's cloudless sky;
The splint'ring wrack of crashing worlds could strike,
But never daunt thy manhood taught to die.

Through thee will live fore'er those happy years
Of peace, of hope, of dearly-purchased joy;
Thy age has found in thee a deathless voice
The solemn march of years will ne'er destroy.

HAVE YOU TRIED THIS?

Steadily the letters come in to the American Classical League Service Bureau asking for help in combating the arguments against the classics. In 1935 all the state chairmen for the League were urged to induce the teachers in their states to answer all criticism of the classics by letter or by friendly visit to the critics. Since that time the Lookout Committee of the League has been formed to work on a national scale. Any teacher who wishes to do so may get in touch with the regional member of the committee nearest to him. The names of the members of the committee were announced in the March, 1936, issue of *LATIN NOTES*. Meanwhile, it is very necessary for teachers to work together in their own communities to correct misapprehensions which have arisen about the classics. Many teachers have done so for years; and their experience shows that every effort of this kind pays in greater professional solidarity.

Articles showing the value of the classics in the training of future citizens can be written for periodicals. Men and women in the community who have an interest in some phase of the classics may be asked to speak before an assembly or a Parent-Teachers' meeting. Many teachers hold an "Open House" occasionally, and show posters, models, and notebooks. Perhaps the public library has space for the hanging of charts showing the value of Latin. If the bank has space for display, an exhibit on the history of Roman coins might be set up. Plays showing the value of Latin and the modernity of ancient civilization are available. Space does not permit the listing of more ideas, but the teacher's own knowledge and ingenuity will add many others.

A few of the mimeographed publications of the League that will be found helpful in this connection are:

88. In Gallia—A Play in English. 10c.
249. Mother Duce—A Derivative Pageant. 10c.
271. A Strange Book—A Play in English. 10c.
328. Open House in the Latin Department. 10c.
418. Directions for Making Attractive Posters. 10c.
430. Rome and the Modern World—A Play in English. 10c.
443. But Why Latin? A Radio Address. 10c.
511. How Latin Helps in Other Subjects. A Play. 10c.
Also, An Illustrated Guide to Ancient Coins. 25c.

—D. P. L.

Miss Ella Larner, of Augusta, Kansas, writes:

Last fall, as we were emerging from a "black blizzard," a beginning Latin class derived much pleasure from an article in a Wichita paper containing words to this effect: "When Kansas adopted the motto, *Ad astra per aspera*, it didn't mean that western Kansas soil was to try it!"

During the presidential campaign, a headline in a newspaper furnished the basis of a discussion in the opening minutes of the second year class. That headline was "Landon Crosses the Rubicon," and the article lauded the skill of the state executive in the accurate exercise of choice between two courses in regard to the California primaries.

Mr. Laurence W. Ross, of the Chapel Hill (N. C.) High School, writes as follows of his scheme of scoring board work in Latin composition:

I count the number of errors that each student has made, usually allowing only one error to the word, and, dividing his total number of words into 100, I multiply this result by the number of errors, subtract the difference from 100, and receive a percentage score for the student's work. For example, Bill has the following sentence: "I am now waiting for the man to whom I handed three letters." He writes: "Hominem nunc exspecto ad quem tres litteras mandavi." Counting *ad quem* as one error, and noting that his sentence should have had seven words, we divide seven into 100, getting ap-

proximately 14, which we multiply by 1; subtract this product from 100, and we have a score of 86 for Bill.

The students eagerly watch this checking procedure, and a definite enthusiasm is noticeable. If I omit it, I receive many requests to "score the sentences."

Please observe that this is a system for scores only. To obtain grades for such work, a teacher must allow for chance, and obtain a grade only after adding up such scores as have been obtained over a period of a reasonable length of time. This will obviate the unfairness which might result in just a single recitation, where one student may have a harder sentence or passage than another.

Some teachers will suggest at this point that this method gives too little credit for actual knowledge, especially of vocabulary; for a student may know the proper word but misuse its case or tense. To such a suggestion I would reply that this sort of exercise is really intended for the fixation of grammatical principles and for the mastery of case and tense endings. The judicious teacher will explain to the students that the figures represent scores and not grades. He can thus arouse a competitive spirit without being unfair to the students.

Miss Margaret Roy, of the Melvin (Ill.) High School, sends in suggestions for a project—"A Book on Roman Customs Made in Roman Style." She writes:

This project is to represent a book made as Roman books were. Write your descriptive material on one side of typing paper, and when all the pages are finished paste them together at the sides. This will make one long strip, with writing in columns. Paste the right-hand side of the last page to a round piece of wood just a little longer than the paper, and roll the paper around the wood as a scroll. Another piece of wood should be pasted to the side of the first page. The ends of the wood should be tapered or carved into knobs, and sandpapered or painted. Tie a small card to the top of the scroll, bearing your name and the title of the book. The title might be "Mores Romanorum." To prevent the scroll from unrolling, make a close fitting cylinder of construction paper and slip it over the scroll.

For further descriptions of Roman books, see Davis, "A Day in Old Rome," pages 210-212, or Johnston, "The Private Life of the Romans," pages 293-294.

The following items might be included in your book. References are to Davis, "A Day in Old Rome."

I, A Roman House (pages 40-48); II, A Roman Marriage Ceremony (pages 67-69); III, Dress for men (pages 80-86); IV, The Diet of the Romans (pages 102-107); V, Dress for Women (pages 86-88); VI, A Roman Funeral (pages 183-188); VII, Roman Names (pages 186-187); VIII, The Baths (pages 358-367); IX, Chariot Races (pages 384-389); X, Gladiator Shows (pages 397-403).

Boxes such as the Romans used to store their books in can be made from round oatmeal boxes covered with construction paper and decorated with a Roman eagle or some other Roman symbol. These may be used to display the finished scrolls in a classroom exhibit.

BOOK NOTES

Horace—Three Phases of His Influence. Lectures Given at Mount Holyoke College in Celebration of the Bimillennium Horatianum, 1935. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. 120 pp. \$1.

This volume, celebrating at the same time the two-thousandth birthday of Horace and the hundredth of Mount Holyoke College, contains the following lectures: "The Influence of Horace on Ronsard and Montaigne," by Paul F. Saintonge; "A Little Farm: The Horatian Concept of Rural Felicity in English Literature," by Leslie G. Burgevin; and "The Horatian Strain in Literary Criticism," by Helen Griffith. The foreword is by Cornelia C. Coulter.

WHAT THEY SAY OF US

That we put every child into a pigeonhole and there have him work and think all by himself, responsible only to the teacher, and oblivious of his classmates, as if learning could ever be separated from living, or as if learning that were not gained in the midst of living could be of any use at all.

But it is not a part of the nature of Latin that it should be learned while one is alone. Let us get away from this type of work by having the children make drill questions for one another, and by letting them ask questions of one another to point out errors in translation. Latin is a language; it should convey ideas; and students should have chances, real chances, to say things to one another for ear and mind training as well as for help toward living and working with others.—Mildred Dean, *Washington, D. C.*

NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Research projects No. 3 and No. 4, as announced in the CLASSICAL OUTLOOK for December, 1936, have been combined. The project now set up is as follows: A controlled experiment to determine the comparative achievement in their students' comprehension of Latin attained (1) by teachers who insist on a recall knowledge of forms, constructions, and vocabulary, and (2) by teachers who expect only a recognition knowledge of forms, constructions, and vocabulary.—Mark E. Hutchinson, Chairman of the Committee on Research.

There was a large and enthusiastic attendance at the meeting of the Foreign Language Section in New Orleans on Feb. 22, conducted under the joint auspices of the American Classical League and the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers in connection with the meeting of the Department of Superintendence of the N. E. A. The general topic under discussion was "Foreign Language Study in the High School of the Future." Papers were read by Lilly Lindquist, Supervisor of Foreign Languages, Detroit Schools, by A. Pelzer Wagener, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia, and by Walter V. Kaulfers, Stanford University, California. These papers were followed by a panel discussion by representatives of the following areas: Secondary Education, H. B. Albery, Chairman, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; High School Principal, Lester Dix, Associate Director, Lincoln School, Teachers College, Columbia University; Classical Language Teacher Training, W. L. Carr, Teachers College, Columbia University; Curriculum Construction, T. H. Briggs, Teachers College, Columbia University; Modern Language Teacher Training, R. O. Roesler, University of Wisconsin; Educational Psychology, M. R. Trabue, Director, Division of Education, University of North Carolina; Measurement and Evaluation, R. W. Tyler, Research Director, Evaluation in the Eight-Year Study, Commission on the Relation of School and College.

Plans are under way for the Seventeenth Annual Meeting of the American Classical League to be held in Detroit, Mich., on the afternoons of June 29 and 30 in connection with the summer meeting of the N. E. A. Dr. Anna P. MacVay, Chairman of the Committee on Cooperation with the N. E. A., is serving as Chairman of the Program Committee for that meeting. The League will also cooperate with the Department of Secondary Education in a meeting to be held on the afternoon of June 28.

Copies of a radio address, "Latin—The Channel of Our Civilization," will be sent gratis upon application to Francis P. Donnelly, S. J., Fordham University, New York City. The address was delivered over Station WNYC on March 14, 1935, by Father Donnelly. It forms a folder of four printed pages.